

## The Snowflake Learns to Dance by Rosy\_el

**Series:** [The Sunshine Boy and the Snowflake Girl \[6\]](#)

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**Summary:**

"Ow," El muttered.

"Sorry," Dustin offered sheepishly. He had stepped on her foot again.

The Spring Semi-Formal was just one week away.

## The Snowflake Learns to Dance

March, 1985

"Ow," El muttered.

"Sorry," Dustin offered sheepishly. He had stepped on her foot again.

"I thought you were supposed to be the one teaching me how to dance?" El grinned, tucking hair behind her ear. It reached a little past her jaw now. Her sentences had grown longer with the help of the school speech therapist, who safely knew little about the girl's "complicated" past.

Holly sat on the floor, Nancy's music box clutched in her small hands. She'd close it and re-open it every time the little bell-like music drew to a close.

Lucas grunted from his place on the couch. "I'm sick of that stupid box, can't you at least play something good?" He crossed his arms indignantly. "Why are we even doing this *here*, where Mike could literally walk in any second?"

Dustin huffed and dropped his hands from El's hand and hip, his focus now blown. "What, do you want to go to your house?"

Lucas narrowed his eyes. "No."

"Oh right, I forgot your house is the psych ward across town," Dustin laughed, revealing two front teeth that now proudly poked out.

"Oh how about we head over to your house and tell your mom about the 'colorful language' you've added to your vocabulary lately," Lucas spat. "Bet she'll really like to hear about that."

Dustin pointed a sharp finger at Lucas. "Mike's house it is, then. Besides, Will said he'd have Mike preoccupied for at least an hour longer."

Will was in on the idea of a few secret dance lessons to prepare El for the spring dance that was coming up in a week. So he had knocked

on Mike's door that morning, asking him to tag along to the comic store, where new X-Men and Fantastic Four editions were supposed to come out that weekend. "They're busy," was Will's simple reply when Mike asked where Lucas and Dustin were.

Holly clamped the music box shut and then opened it again, the tinkling music restarting as Dustin and El resumed their former positions.

"One, two, three, one, two, three—"

"Ouch, Dustin!" El bent over and rubbed her toe. "Maybe Lucas should take a turn."

Dustin frowned and scratched at the curls spilling out from under his baseball cap. He shrugged and turned to Lucas.

"Uh-uh. I'm not getting up." Lucas crossed his legs.

A rattling sounded from upstairs and the small band froze, the chiming from the music box still playing.

"Mike? Who's down there?" Nancy. She trotted down the steps and looked over the railway. "What are you guys doing here? Mike isn't home." She inquired, eyebrow lifted in confusion.

"Holly let us in," Dustin replied. Eleven nodded. Holly restarted the music.

"Oh, you guys are just hanging out with Baby Holly?" Nancy folded her arms across her periwinkle blouse. "That's rich."

Eleven spoke up. "I can't dance."

Nancy's brow again quirked up. She hadn't expected that. Then she recalled a conversation she had overheard earlier that week.

*"I need a new white button up, my other ones are kind of small,"* Mike had informed his mom while packing his lunch for school. Nancy was running late, fussing over her hair in the hall mirror. Mike hadn't had a reason to wear any of his nice shirts since Will's "funeral". He had experienced a growth spurt since then, it had been more than a year.

Thirteen now, he had grown a few inches but remained thin and somewhat disproportionate. *"I really need one by the 23rd, okay?"*

Karen placed a resigned hand on her hip. *"What exactly is this for, Michael?"*

Nancy heard Mike's distinctive sigh. *"It's just this school dance thing. It's not a big deal but the guys and I are going and I just need to look decent."*

Karen hummed thoughtfully. *"Is El among those 'guys'?"*

*"I mean,"* Mike wrapped his lunch up in a brown paper bag. Nancy had forgotten about her hair, straining to catch her little brother's words. *"She'll be there, yeah."*

Karen gave a satisfied *"Hm."* Nancy found herself chewing her lip, a smug smile pulling at her mouth. *"In that case, we might need to go out on Saturday and try on some things. It's hard to know what will fit you by just eyeballing it."*

Mike was without a doubt irritated. It was less than likely he'd like to go out shopping with his mother on a perfectly good Saturday when he could be holding a campaign or hanging out with El in the basement.

*"Okay,"* is all that came from Mike, though, thoroughly surprising Nancy. Mike must have really cared about looking good for whatever little middle school dance was being held.

Nancy thought back to the present and smiled down at Eleven, who stood nervously watching Nancy. "And you think these buffoons are going to teach you how to dance, El?" She laughed out loud and jogged down the rest of the stairs. "And is this what you've been using for music?" She gestured to her little music box which Holly held gingerly. "No, we're going to need some real music down here. I'll be right back."

Back she was a few minutes later, heavy cassette player in her arms. She set the thing down with a soft thud. Nancy touched her chin in thought. "I don't have many tapes..." her face lit up with a smile. "But I know who does."

Jonathan was there in less than ten minutes, stack of mix tapes in arm.

"Okay," Nancy spoke to Eleven, Dustin and Lucas had retired to the couch. "Jonathan, come here so El can watch first." Jonathan looked unsure, a pink tinge appearing on his face. "Come on!" He made his way to her and placed a careful hand on her lower back, avoiding her gaze. She caught his hand in hers and also felt a slight blush make its way to her cheeks. "Just tell me you aren't going to play *Careless Whisper*." She teased.

Jonathan smirked. "Do I look like a fourteen-year-old girl to you?" That drew a laugh from Nancy, allowing the pair to relax into their stance.

David Bowie's *Sorrow* instead filled the room. "You two," Nancy jerked her head in Dustin and Lucas' direction. "Come here, you could probably use a few tips before the dance next week." The pair looked at each other, eyebrows scrunched and mouths open.

"What do you expect me to do right now, dance with this moron?" Lucas pointed a thumb at Dustin, whose mouth hung open still.

Nancy beamed. "That's exactly what I expect you to do." Lucas slapped his knee and starting to cackle at the idea. "Unless you want to totally humiliate yourself in front of Sarah Nullman next Saturday." That shut Lucas up. Nancy often heard the boys yelling from downstairs in the nights she spent studying in her bedroom. A person picked up things after so many nights of overhearing the boys tease one another. Dustin was then the one cackling. Even Eleven covered her mouth, a few giggles escaping her lips.

"That's what I thought," Nancy smiled, clearly pleased with herself. "You and Lucas follow Jonathan and I'll lead."

Grumbling, the two boys stood up. While they bickered in the background about who would take the first turn being the girl, Nancy turned to Eleven, who sat patiently on the floor beside Holly. "Watch us for a minute and then you can try with Jonathan and I'll point out anything I notice that you can fix."

*With your long blonde hair*

*and your eyes of blue*

*The only thing I ever got from you*

*was sorrow*

*Sorrow*

Nancy snorted at the lyrics. "This is what you thought to bring to teach El how to dance?" She questioned. Her hand was in his and her other laid gently on his shoulder. Jonathan shrugged.

"I don't exactly own a lot of ballads."

"Fair enough."

After a minute of careful footsteps, Nancy pulled away from Jonathan and grabbed El's hand. Lucas slapped Dustin's sweaty palm from his waist, demanding to be the male half of the duo from that point. Dustin gave him a mock-salute and instead put his hands on Lucas' shoulders. "This is messed up," Lucas muttered.

El placed a small hand on Jonathan's shoulder, extending her arm all the way out. Jonathan smiled down at her happily, amused at the whole situation. He had heard Will mention the dance a couple times and wondered if there was a girl Will had thought about asking. He didn't seem too worried about girls yet though, contentedly occupied with drawing intense scenes of magic battle and reading comics and designing intricate campaigns. He was only thirteen; he had plenty of time to stress over the opposite gender.

*I tried to find her*

*'Cause I can't resist her*

*(I tried to find her)*

*I never knew just how much I missed her*

*Sorrow*

## Sorrow

Eleven sensed that the words playing in the background resembled something of what Jonathan felt toward Nancy, his eyes kept drifting over to her as she corrected Dustin's posture or the placement of Lucas' hands. *"Ok, I'm not touching him there."* She could sense the emotions of the people around her with ease. Thoughts often filled her mind that she didn't think were her own. But she had yet to tell anyone that.

"Alright, yeah," Jonathan's attention was back on the girl in front of him, "you just follow the boy's lead—"

"Why does the boy have to lead?" El petitioned.

Jonathan blinked, unsure of how to answer. He looked over at Nancy, who was grinning. "That's right El. Smash the patriarchy." She laughed, offering Jonathan a thumbs-up. "I guess just let Mike lead this time around. You wouldn't want to damage his fragile sense of masculinity," she snickered sisterly, imagining Mike leading El on the dance floor in his new, crisp button-up shirt.

Clueless as to what any of that meant, El resumed her dancing.

Another twenty minutes passed of Nancy critiquing the three children, and even Jonathan a few times (*"El, move your hips more, yeah, yeah, that's better. And you need to loosen up, Jonathan. You aren't a mannequin."*), before they heard the door swing open and four feet come running to the basement. Everyone stopped and Dustin smacked the stop button on the cassette player.

"No, they did Jean weird in this copy, I'm telling you they—" Mike cut himself off. Will tried to cover his suspicious smile. "What the crap?"

Mike and Will appeared, freezing upon seeing Dustin, Lucas, Eleven, Nancy, Jonathan, and little Holly awkwardly standing around in silence.

"We just got here. Nancy told us to wait for you down here," Dustin quickly offered his fabricated explanation, straight-faced and

standing in an effort to block the cassette player from Mike's view.

"But—"

"Uh, my mom just wanted me to check on Will and there he is, so, I'll just be leaving," Jonathan added. He glanced at his box of tapes and swallowed. "Also, I left these here... a while ago." Gathering them up in his arms, he turned to Nancy. "See you later."

"Yeah," she smiled, suddenly a little shy. She reached out to touch his sleeve as he turned to go. "Thanks."

"Thank you," El added softly but gratefully nonetheless. Jonathan nodded and smiled at her, musing Will's hair on his way past.

Mike blinked. "Uh, alright then."

The five teenagers watched movies in the basement until everyone's curfew, a measly 10:30 p.m., appeared on the clock hanging by the stairs. They each filed out, smack talk and affectionate taunts and laughter still flying at one another. El gave Mike an especially sweet smile before saying goodnight, bringing a fire to Mike's cheeks.

Mike walked back downstairs to pick up the basement before going to bed; he'd rather do it now than have his mom wake him in the morning to do it. As he tossed the last pillow from the floor back onto the sofa, he heard footsteps find their way onto the staircase. "Mike?" It was Nancy's voice.

"Yeah?" He inquired quizzically. Nancy made her way down the rest of the stairs. She had on light blue pajamas and her hair was damp. Mike glanced back at the clock. 10:48.

"I heard about the dance at your school next week," she stated, head turned slightly. Mike scratched his neck in discomfort, unsure of where exactly this was going. "You know how to slow dance, right?"

He swallowed at that. He had seen couples slow dance, but really only in movies and at a few extended family members' lame wedding receptions, where he had stayed sitting at a table eating cake. He shrugged.



Nancy smiled and padded over to the cassette player, pressing down on the play button. Quiet music filled the room. Mike's eyebrows pinched together but he followed his older sister's lead as she put his hand on her hip and held the other in her own.

By 12:03 Mike had stepped on Nancy's foot thirteen times and had kicked a chair twice out of frustration but had finally nailed the motions, earning a proud grin from his sister. "You're ready to whisk El right off her feet," she laughed teasingly, pushing Mike's shoulder which sent him flopping onto the couch.

"Shut up," he murmured meekly, shoving her right back.

They turned on E.T. and that's how Karen found them the next morning, snoring in sleeping bags on the basement floor, the tiny television set still buzzing faintly.

### **Author's Note:**

I have a Nancy/Jonathan little blip that is shortly following the events of this one. I'll post it outside of this series though. For those of you leaving kudos and commenting (especially those commenting), thank you so, so much. You don't know how much it means to get the amazing feedback you've been giving me. Also, don't hesitate in sending me a little request. I live for inspiration.

-rosy

P.S. I hope you liked the sweet sibling moment at the end. I'm really interested in exploring Nancy and Mike's relationship following what went down that November week in 1983.